

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 EURE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00
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O 031315Z AUG 77
FM AMEMBASSY NICOSIA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6227
INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY ATHENS IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS
USNMR SHAPE BEL
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER
USDOCOSOUTH NAPLES IT
USMISSION NATO
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
DIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L NICOSIA 2023

DEPARTMENT PASS SECRETARY
BRUSSELF FOR USEEC; USCINCEUR AND USDOCOSOUTH FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, CY
SUBJECT: SUCCESSION TO CYPRIOT PRESIDENCY

REF: NICOSIA 1175 (NOTAL)

1. IN THE IMMEDIATE WAKE OF ARCHBISHOP MAKARIOS' DEATH IT IS TOO
EARLY TO PREDICT WHO THE NEXT PRESIDENT OF CYPRUS WILL BE.
JOCKEYING FOR POSITION HAS ALREADY BEGUN, BUT IT MAY BE SOME
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DAYS BEFORE THE MOST IMPORTANT CANDIDATES EMERGE. WE FEEL FAIRLY
CONFIDENT, HOWEVER THAT THE NEXT PRESIDENT WILL BE AMONG THE FOL-
LOWING PERSONALITIES:

--TASSOS PAPADOPOULOS, AGE 43, IS ONE OF THE STRONG CANDIDATES.
HE IS THE GREEK CYPRIOT NEGOTIATOR, WAS A CLOSE CONFIDANT OF THE
ARCHBISHOP. IN THE LAST PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS HE AVOIDED SUP-
PORTING EITHER OF THE TWO RIGHT-WING PARTIES AND THEREFORE DID

NOT CREATE AN INSTANT OPPOSITION AMONG THOSE WHO WOULD HAVE SUPPORTED HIS BID FOR THE PRESIDENCY. IN THE PAST, COMMUNIST AND EDEK (LYSSARIDES) LEADERSHIP HAVE INDICATED THEY COULD NOT SUPPORT PAPADOPOULOS, BUT THEY MIGHT BE BROUGHT INTO LINE IF THEY FELT PAPADOPOULOS WOULD WIN THE ELECTION WITHOUT THEM. PAPADOPOULOS IS BRILLIANT, A TOUGH POLITICIAN AND NEGOTIATOR. HIS MOST NOTEWORTHY CHARACTERISTIC IS HIS STRONG PAN-HELLENISTIC, ANTI-TURKISH VIEWPOINT.

--GLAFCOS CLERIDES, AGE 57, WAS BEFORE 1974 THE MOST LIKELY SUCCESSOR TO MAKARIOS. HE WAS ACTING PRESIDENT DURING THE FIVE MONTHS BETWEEN THE 1974 COUP AND MAKARIOS' RETURN TO CYPRUS. HE LOST A GOOD DEAL OF SUPPORT BY HIS RELATIVELY MODERATE VIEWS TOWARD THE INTERCOMMUNAL NEGOTIATIONS AND HIS APPARENT OPPOSITION TO THE ARCHBISHOP'S NEGOTIATING POLICY. AS A RESULT, HIS PARTY, THE DEMOCRATIC RALLY, WAS SOUNDLY TROUNCED IN THE 1976 PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS. WHILE THE PARTY GAINED ABOUT 25 PERCENT OF THE VOTES, IT WON NO SEATS. CLERIDES HAS BEEN MAKING SOMETHING OF A COMEBACK AND THERE HAVE BEEN RECENT INDICATIONS THAT THE ARCHBISHOP DID NOT WANT CLERIDES TO LEAVE THE POLITICAL ARENA ENTIRELY. CLERIDES, LIKE PAPADOPOULOS, WOULD BE OPPOSED BY THE LEFT; BOTH THE COMMUNISTS AND EDEK HAVE ATTACKED HIM SHARPLY AS A "COUPIST" IN RECENT MONTHS.

--SPYROS KYPRIANOU, AGE 44, IS THE ACTING PRESIDENT AND LEADER OF THE LARGEST PARTY IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES. HIS HEALTH IS VERY BAD, AND HE IS GENERALLY VIEWED AS WEAK AND INEFFECTUAL, HOLDING HIS PLACE ONLY BECAUSE HE WAS DESIGNATED BY THE ARCHBISHOP

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TO BE THE LEADER OF THE PARTY. HIS PARTY, THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY, HAS BEEN SHOWING SIGNS OF POSSIBLE DISINTEGRATION, WITH PAPADOPOULOS ATTEMPTING TO HIVE OFF SOME OF HIS SUPPORT. WHEN THE ARCHBISHOP DIED, KYPRIANOU WAS AT HOME RECOVERING FROM A SERIOUS ILLNESS AND WAS NOT EVEN TAKING TELEPHONE CALLS. HE DID MANAGE TO CHAIR THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS MEETING IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE DEATH, BUT WE DOUBT THAT HIS HEALTH IS UP TO A PRESIDENTIAL RUN.

--PASCALIS PASCALIDES, AGE 48, IS THE HEAD OF HELLENIC MINES, ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT BUSINESS GROUPINGS IN CYPRUS. HE IS AN EXTREMELY ABLE BUSINESSMAN WHO HAS AVOIDED ANY PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT IN POLITICS. IMMEDIATELY AFTER HIS FIRST HEART ATTACK, THE ARCHBISHOP WAS UNDERSTOOD TO HAVE SUGGESTED PASCALIDES AS A POSSIBLE SUCCESSOR. ALSO IN HIS FAVOR WOULD BE THE TACIT SUPPORT OF THE COMMUNISTS AND LYSSARIDES; WE UNDERSTAND THAT THEY REGARD PASCALIDES AS THE MOST ACCEPTABLE OF THE MAIN CANDIDATES. HE TOO HAS HAD A HISTORY OF HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE AND BAD HEALTH WHICH MIGHT PREVENT HIM FROM ASSUMING OFFICE. IN A CONVERSATION ON AUG 3, THE GERMAN CHARGE D'AFFAIRES REPORTED THAT HE HAD IT FROM A GOOD SOURCE THAT PASCALIDES HAD ALREADY BEEN ASKED BY LEADING POLITICAL FIGURES TO RUN FOR THE PRESIDENCY. PASCALIDES HAD RESPONDED HE WOULD ONLY DO SO IF HE HAD THE SUPPORT OF ALL PARTIES.

2. THE NAMES MENTIONED ABOVE ARE THE MOST LIKELY CANDIDATES. OTHER, DARK HORSE POSSIBILITIES WOULD BE THE MINISTER OF FINANCE, ANDREAS PATSIDALIDES, AND THE MINISTER OF JUSTICE, GEORGE IOANNIDES. EITHER OF THESE PROBABLY WOULD BE MORE OF A CARETAKER PRESIDENT THAN AN EFFECTIVE LONG-TERM LEADER. EZEKIAS PAPAIOANNOU, CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY, HAS, IT IS RUMORED, SAID HE MIGHT BE INTERESTED IN RUNNING FOR THE PRESIDENCY. THE COMMUNIST PARTY IS THE ONLY WELL-ORGANIZED PARTY ON THE ISLAND AND COMMANDS ABOUT 35 PERCENT OF THE TOTAL VOTE, SO HIS CANDIDACY WOULD HAVE STRONG ELECTORAL WEIGHT BEHIND IT. ON THE OTHER HAND, IF HE RAN, RIGHT-WING OPPOSITION WOULD PROBABLY COALESCE AGAINST HIM, SO WE THINK HIS CHANCES ARE NOT VERY GREAT.

3. MAKARIOS' DEATH ALSO PUT HIS OTHER POSITION, THAT OF ARCH-CONFIDENTIAL

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BISHOP, UP FOR GRABS. THE OVERWHELMING FAVORITE TO REPLACE HIM IN THIS ROLE IS CHRISOSTOMOS, THE BISHOP OF PAPHOS. THE ARCH-BISHOP IS ELECTED BY THE GREEK CYPRIOT COMMUNITY VOTING FOR ELECTORS. CHRISOSTOMOS IS BY FAR THE STRONGEST PERSONALITY AMONG THE BISHOPS OF CYPRUS. IT DOES NOT APPEAR THAT HE HAS A CHANCE TO BE ELECTED CONCURRENTLY AS PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC, ALTHOUGH AT TIMES IN THE PAST HE HAS INDICATED THAT HE MIGHT TRY TO FOLLOW MAKARIOS' FOOTSTEPS.

DILLERY

NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED SECRETARY.

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